

Message Text

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65

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, IC

SUBJECT: PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS

1. PRESENTED CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT KRISTJAN ELDJARN AT PRESIDENT'S RESIDENCE OUTSIDE REYKJAVIK SEPTEMBER 8. CONSISTENT WITH LOCAL CUSTOM, NO SPEECHES WERE MADE EITHER BY PRESIDENT OR ME, BUT PRESIDENT DID REFER TO EXCELLENT RELATIONS BETWEEN US AND ICELAND AND ASKED ME TO CONVEY HIS VERY BEST WISHES TO PRESIDENT FORD AND ASSURANCES OF ICELAND'S CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP FOR UNITED STATES AND AMERICAN PEOPLE. I RECIPROCATED WITH EXPRESSION OF HIGH US REGARD AND FRIENDSHIP FOR ICELAND BASED ON HISTORIC TIES, COMMON COMMITMENTS AND SHARED VALUES.

2. DURING INFORMAL CHAT WHICH FOLLOWED FOREGOING EXCHANGE, PRESIDENT SAID HE UNDERSTOOD I HAD BEEN QUOTE HISTORIAN UNQUOTE AND ASKED RE MY AREAS OF INTEREST. I TOLD HIM OF MY EARLY INTEREST IN ICELANDIC VOYAGES TO NORTH AMERICAN WHICH ONE YEAR OF SERVICE IN GREENLAND DURING WWII HAD STIMULATED FURTHER. THIS LED PRESIDENT TO MENTION HIS OWN RESEARCH IN GREENLAND AS MEMBER OF DANISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEAM DURING WAR. WE DISCOVERED WE BOTH KNOW VERY WELL ERIKSFJORD AREA IN GREENLAND WHICH HE HAD EXPLORED AS MEMBER OF TEAM AND WHERE I HAD SERVED IN MILITARY. NEXT TWENTY MINUTES OF CONVERSATION WHICH PRESIDENT APPEARED TO ENJOY AND IN WHICH ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER OLAFUR JOHANNESSEN, WHO HAD BEEN PRESENT FOR CREDENTIALS CEREMONY, JOINED, COVERED USEFULNESS OF

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SAGAS AS HISTORICAL RECORDS AND WHY NORSE SETTLEMENTS IN

ICELAND SURVIVED WHILE THOSE IN GREENLAND DISAPPEARED. FOLLOWING THIS DISCUSSION, PRESIDENT AND MRS ELDJARN HOSTED ONE-HOUR RECEPTION FOR EMBASSY DIPLOMATIC STAFF AND WIVES AT WHICH COMICEDEFOR AND MRS BERNSTEIN WERE ALSO GUESTS. ICELANDIC PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED MEMBERS ICELANDIC FOREIGN MINISTRY AND OF LOCAL COMMUNITY. AS I TOOK MY LEAVE, PRESIDENT WARMLY WISHED ME QTE ALL SUCCESS UNQTE IN MY MISSION. I RESPONDED WITH EXPRESSIONS GOOD WISHES ON COMMENCEMENT OF HIS THIRD TERM AS PRESIDENT.

3. COMMENT: PRESIDENT'S ROLE IN ICELAND IS CHIEFLY CEREMONIAL AND MY INITIAL MEETING WITH HIM SEEMS TO HAVE FOLLOWED ACCEPTABLE NON-SUBSTANTIVE SCENARIO. EXCHANGES DID AFFORD OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AGAIN AND TALK INFORMALLY WITH OLAFUR JOHANNESSEN, KEY FIGURE IN COALITION, LEADER OF PROGRESSIVE PARTY AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER WHOSE RESERVATIONS RE US MILITARY PRESENCE ICELAND ARE WELL-KNOWN TO DEPARTMENT. LAST WEEK, DURING MY CALL ON HIM IN HIS CAPACITY AS ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER TO PRESENT COPIES OF LETTERS OF CREDENCE AND OF RECALL, JOHANNESSEN HAD NOTED THAT QTE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR HAS SPECIAL POSITION HERE UNQTE. AT PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION HE REITERATED WILLINGNESS TO BE AVAILABLE AT ANY TIME TO MEET WITH ME.
BLAKE

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